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Ambiances venues for sustainable higher education

conference in

culture and
sustainable
cities

environmental activism in art

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The concept of « ambiance »

The concept of « ambiance » is currently questioning the interaction between architecture and (urban) environment, sound and climate, uses and perception. Studies are therefore mobilizing different disciplines (art, design, architecture, urban planning, engineering, technologies, physics, climatology, sociology, psychology, phenomenology, philosophy, communication…) with their respective resources (perceptions, cultural approaches, methods, tools). In parallel, « ambiance » has been individually assimilated by all these different disciplines. So they come not only into the work/discussion with their respective resources, but also with their own strategies and prospects/ refuges.

Art and music for example have been enhanced and stimulated by ambiances. Artists have even vigorously contributed to improve their positive assessment, their mediation and their enhanced value. Above all they raised the collective awareness and memory of them. They have created and keep on creating new ambiances (fictional ones for example). All these activities are related to what we could link to mood, mind and knowledge, to the benefit of a better understanding of art, but also in favour of a so constructed common ambiance culture.

Contemporary ambiances (even artistic ones) are more and more saturated/ controled/randomed by technology, which means:

- The disruption of our experience of nature (distance with the other being/nature; fragmentary, incomplete, missing pieces of nature; conflict between intention and hazardous space information, in other words: conflicts between the signed and not signed aura)
- The reduction of self-made experience and representation: we are all living the same (*unique sense/ unique meaning* Walter Benjamin, *mono-culture* Thomas Baur….), we let the systems / machines do & decide for us; we live sensory, postural reductions: we absent pre-linguistic relationships with the other or the other other (being, nature); we dont no longer need to adjust with the other and the other/other/ we dont no longer know how to adjust with…..)

which leads in consequence to a fondamental transformation of our environmental perception, but also of our individual, social and cultural self-perception…

Questions

NOW:

Are we really only users?
How deep is our actual relationship with the other and the other other being/nature?

The ongoing debate on environmental emergencies which questions for example our "harmonious coexistence", is an opportunity to examine how contemporary artists continue their work on ambiances and co-existence:

How they take care of this extensive theme?
What kinds of co-existences are interesting to them?
Can they help us to find original exploration modes and methods?
Can they suggest new questions in the field of sustainability?

We will try to formulate some answers by focusing on environmental activism in art and especially on our one interrogations on ambiantal perception and representation (BAK Eléonore *Reside in the un-viewed, Kinds of sound visualizations*, doctoral thesis in architecture https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01451609 prepared in CRESSON/ National High School for architecture Grenoble 2016 / UMR (mixt research unity) AAU (Architectures, Ambiances/ Urbanités) CNRS 1563 - ÉNSAs Grenoble & Nantes F https://aau.archi.fr/cresson/). This focus is faced with a number of:

- preoccupations, including observation, exploration (modes), mapping of sound-clouds and analysis of the topics of listening patterns, as an integrated approach for ambiances,

- sustainability challenges, including re-introduction (the notion of : sustainable higher education) of multi-sensory meanings and intensive values as increasing the energy/vitality of an ambiance (planned, pre-architectured, pre-engineered (the notion of « pre-ambiance ») or hazardous space information, as well (or less) satisfying resources for co-existence; higher or lower porosity to the other/other (convolution of bodily and ambiantal gestures [1]) as well (or less) satisfying resources for environmental and cultural consciousness; as well (or less) satisfying resources for sustainable ambiantal prospection and creativity.

Leaning on few of our sound-visualizations we will examine un-viewed (in the sense of forgotten, nebulous, unconscious, but not mute at all) aspects of ambiances. After a short introduction in our exploration and representations modes, we will compare two listening patterns (simulations of *sound-clouds*): 1. *Fontaines de Clans*, which is showing individual listening patterns of six fountains ; 2. *St Jean de Luz*, which is showing an acoustic encoding. To go deeper into our exploration modes, but also into the aforementioned un-viewed, we present also a practical exercise (for further information see our workshop *To plunge into without control / Micro-perception as a value-belief-norm model*).

1 While Jean-Paul THIBAUD is using the term for describing a specific corporal ability (recognition and bodily adjustment with an ambiantal style « […] we shall assume that each ambiance corresponds to a style of motility and that this style is shared by all the participants involved in the ambiance. In this case, the manner in which we move would be affected by the place in which movement occurs » (THIBAUD Jean-Paul, The sensory fabric of urban ambiance, in Senses and Society, vol. 6, N° 2, pp. 208, august 29th 2015, http://cressound.grenoble.archi.fr/fichier_pdf/ article/Thibaud_2011_sensory_fabric_urban_ambiances.pdf) we use the term ambiant gestures for encompassing all potentialy interactions, all what is happening in the so called playing aura : planned, not planned or hazardous, known or not known, analyzable or not analyzable, measurable or not measurable side by side, metabolic mixing, blending (see here Tim Ingold) or convolution of... phenomenons, beings, cultures « governing »: our environment ; ourselves ; our relationships to the other and the other other.

Approaching very close nuances of atmospheres

As an artist and specially as a performer I was searching how to annoy the deeply rooted culture of art as an implanted inert thing, idea which is ignoring that art isn't an object, but a never ending process, a never ending experience of the other and the other other. In nineteen eighty-five I discovered sounds as plastic material to sculpt morphologies; to generate volumes where different morphologies get in touch with space in the aim to set our attention free for intensive, not obligatory extensive values. I introduced these sounds in unusual places (for example architectural panopticums, labyrinths, caves, empty water tanks) where the given climates even microclimates and thermo-dynamics (I call this given ambiant gestures) went within them in a characterized way, enriched their presence and stimulated their vitality. To resume I don't create fixed sound objects or forms (as sound-designers) but some kind of temperated bodily beings.

In my exhibitions I was not only often disappointed by the law attention of my public to intensive values but I was more and more frustrated by their incomplete understanding of my works. As soundscape notices to discretion, as hearing is a solitary experience whose potential refinement remains difficult to surround by language, I began in nineteen ninety five a series of sound-drawings to transmit my sensory perception and feeling of soundscape. But even if I was voluntarily juggling with multi-sensory generated meaning of these drawings, it was always difficult for my public to enter in a non cartesian logic.

But how come back to more embedded meanings?

Nature doesn't think, nature is (Gilles Deleuze)

I dont know what nature is

Listening is a solitary action

Contemporary environmental creativity

Technology

unique perspectives
unique meanings
lost of hazardous
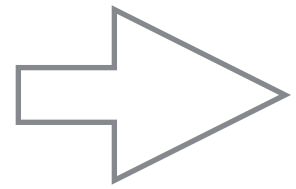space informations ....

The Audience

creator & listeners
have their one
perception (biography;
disposability)

Culture & education

Self-education

Higher sustainable education

The meaning of sustainable higher education

closed to environmental activism in art:
=

Creation

Research through art:

self- education

forcing our academism

Sustainable higher education

Performativity of ART

enriching our:
- environmental perception
- individual, social, cultural self- perception

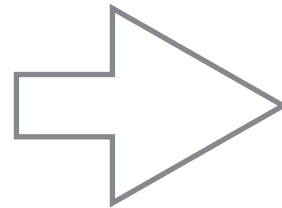**ambiances as gestural reservoir**

Creativity
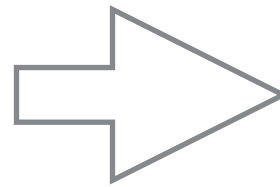
What kinds of performativities are interesting me as an artist and researcher?

higher disquiet
more plural perception of
boundlessness sensitive phenomenons
and intensive values

- stimulation of our attention and disposability ⟶
- higher porosity to the other and the other other being/ nature
- higher awareness of the so called *playing aura* (the interaction of known or unknown, conscient or not conscient, controllable or not controllable, conceivable or inconceivable ambiant & cultural phenomenons)

more complexed and nuanced gestures
(ambiances as gestural reservoir: the
notion of convolution)
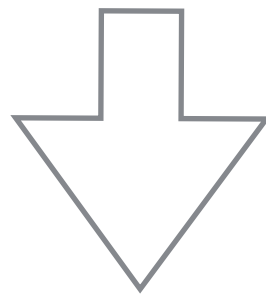
- enrichment and evolution of our body-linguistics;
- deeper analyze / higher representation, especially of our environment which becomes: **simultaneously guide and consequence**

evolution of our:
• human & environmental relationships
• instrumental & ambiant creativity

You should know that I draw sound-beings. I like also to call them *sound-clouds* in order to suggest that
1. I am always inside of these beings and
2. in contact with something living by itself.

I proceed by different exploration and representation modes: the quasi blind representing (manual drawing of echo-located sounds in relationship to climat and thermo-dynamics: progressive colour chart from black to white from intensive sounds to "silence") is reinforced by a specific modus operandi, a kind of falling, which I call « the plunge ». This technique, gradually real, virtual completes the experience by finely postural adjustments and enters into the representation by trembling lines, textures, inner dynamic of the pattern. If you don't integrate convolution of bodily/listening and ambiant gestures, you will see nothing else than a spiral in black and white.

ART - ARCHITECTURE - CRITICAL DESIGN

simple Listening pattern
turning on 360°
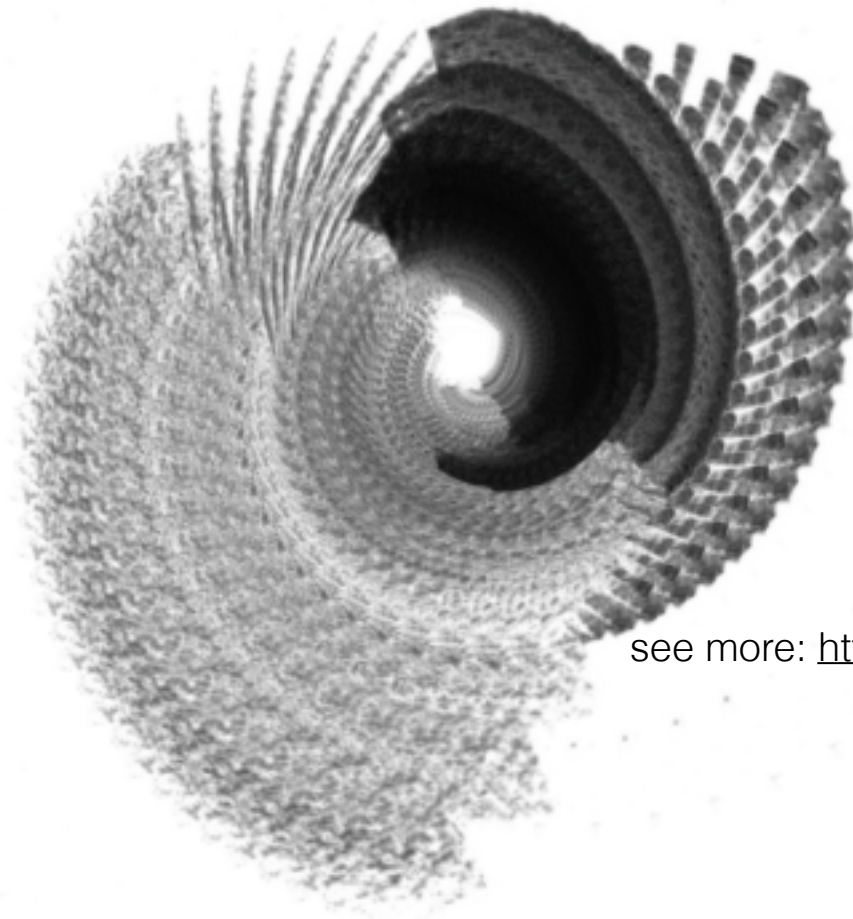
Simulation of a soundcloud
La Lioura fountain Clans
© Eléonore Bak 2012

see more: https://www.eleonorebak.com/dessins-d-ecoute

Lets see what happens when I animate the pattern… and when I show how I perceive the volume by plunging into the given ambiance.

Simulation of a soundcloud
Vieux lavoir fountain Clans
© Eléonore Bak 2012

see more: https://www.eleonorebak.com/dessins-d-ecoute

Exhibited VIDEO N° 1: *Six Fountains of Clans, simulation of twelve sound-clouds*
© Bak Eléonore 2012 - registration number SACD N°: 274641
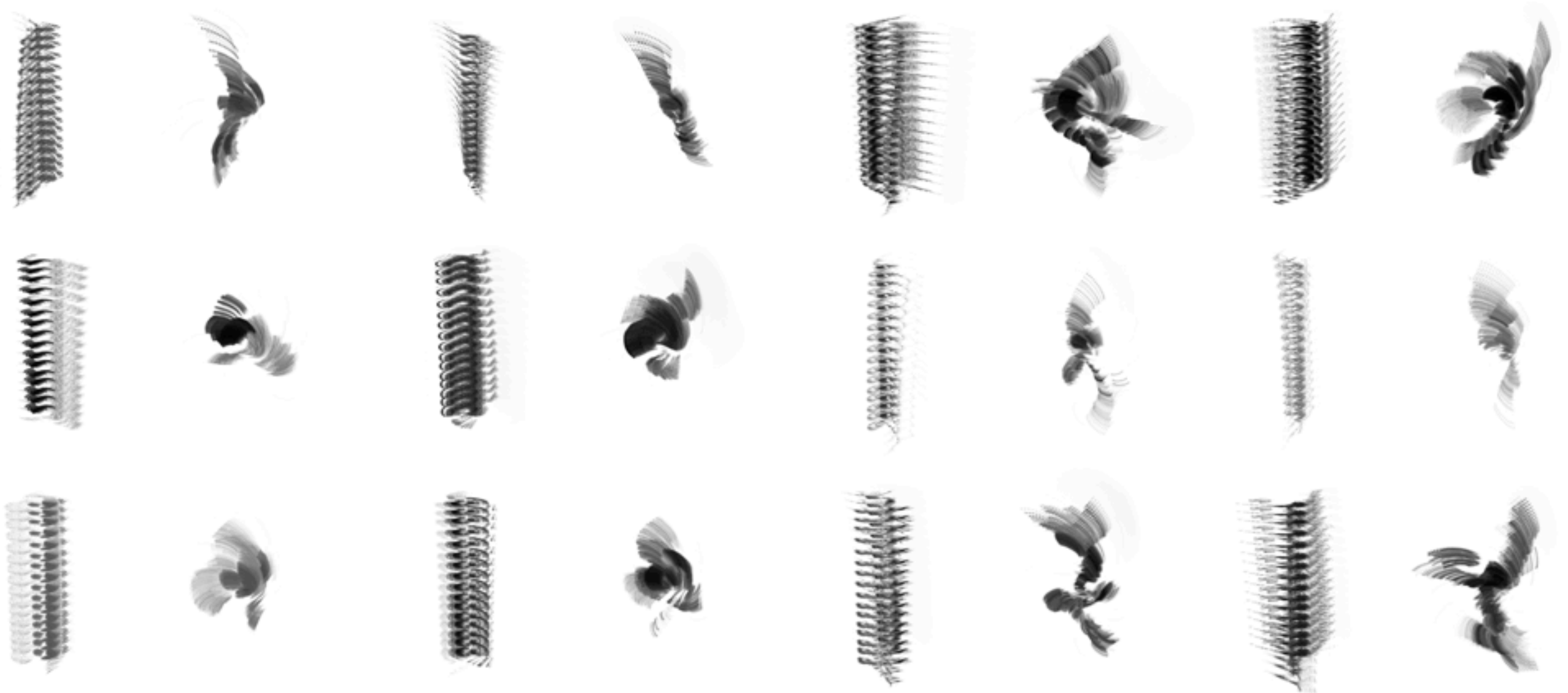
Summary:

Simulation of twelve sound-clouds, based on morphological studies of my auditory perception:
After examining a given natural sound (water running of fountains), I chose a pattern (typical running noise) and studied it in a stereophonic way. I proceeded here by echolocation and special movements and gestures as turning around my one axis, torsions of my body, nodding, shaking my head, which helped me to observe what happened around me, to make my pattern clearer, to adjust me with it and to find it again even at the moment I had changed my position. The drawings represent what happens in front of me and in my back (hovering around the pattern 180°; ≈ 5 minutes for one drawing; ≈ distance of 15 minutes between each drawing), in order to obtain listening patterns of the given « sound-clouds ». The medium (drawing, charcoal on paper) and the technique (black and grey tones are corresponding to the listened sound levels: as water, they are running, dripping, … they are more or less dense, transparent, even textured (relief and superposition); the impetus of the points and the end of the drawing lines help to unravel the directions, the inner movement and dynamic rhythm of the sounds. I used also these inner movements and dynamics as sceno-graphic information for my animations. Done with flash, these animations show the inner and outer structure of all these sound-clouds and permit us to discover and compare their different rhythms.

Simulation of 12 sound clouds
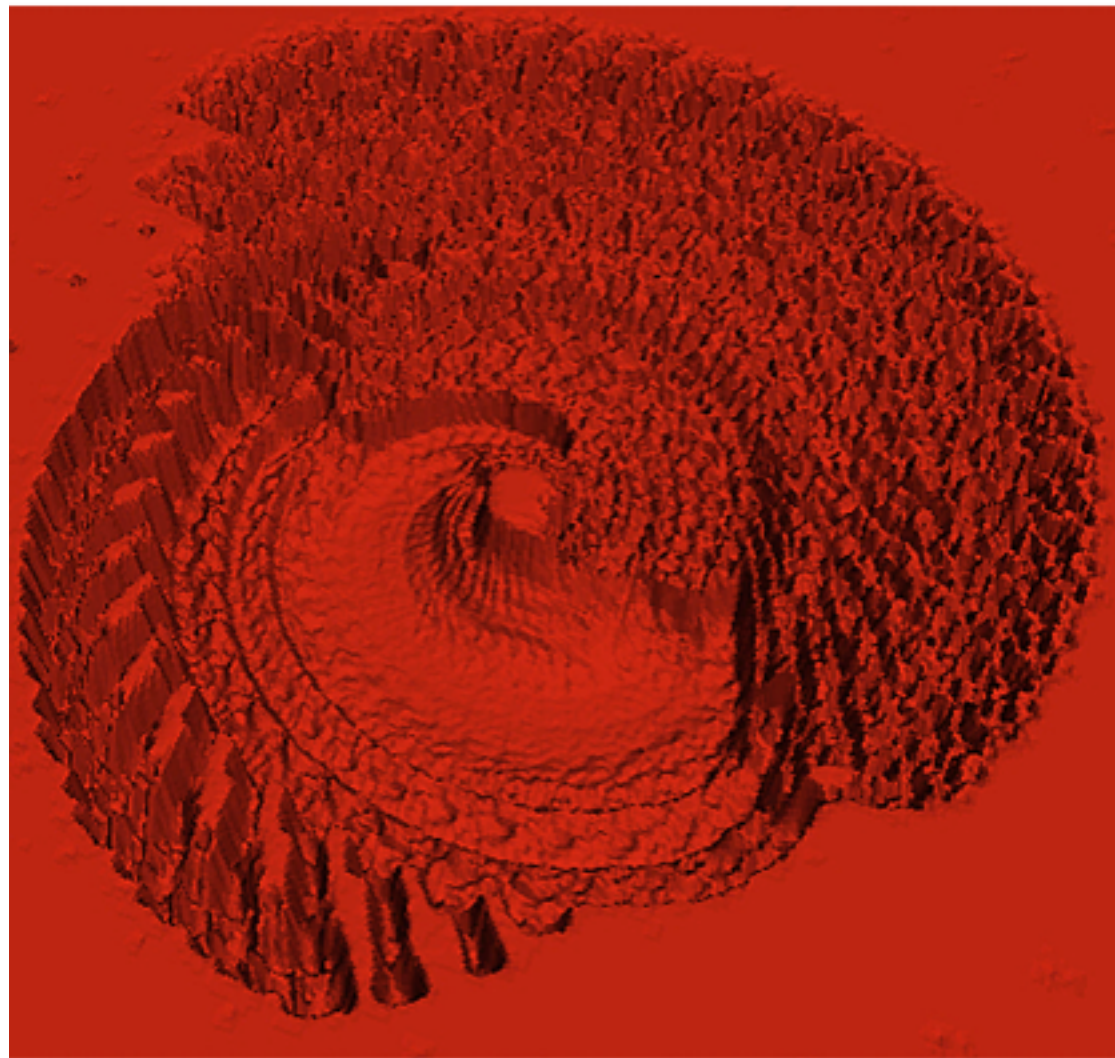fountains of Clans
© Eléonore Bak 2012

see more: https://www.eleonorebak.com/dessins-d-ecoute

ART - ARCHITECTURE - CRITICAL DESIGN

from 2D   to mouvement

3 D

Simulation of a soundcloud
La Lioura fountain Clans
© Eléonore Bak 2016

see more https://www.eleonorebak.com/traverser-le-miroir

Drawings as a gestural reservoir for a handy aps
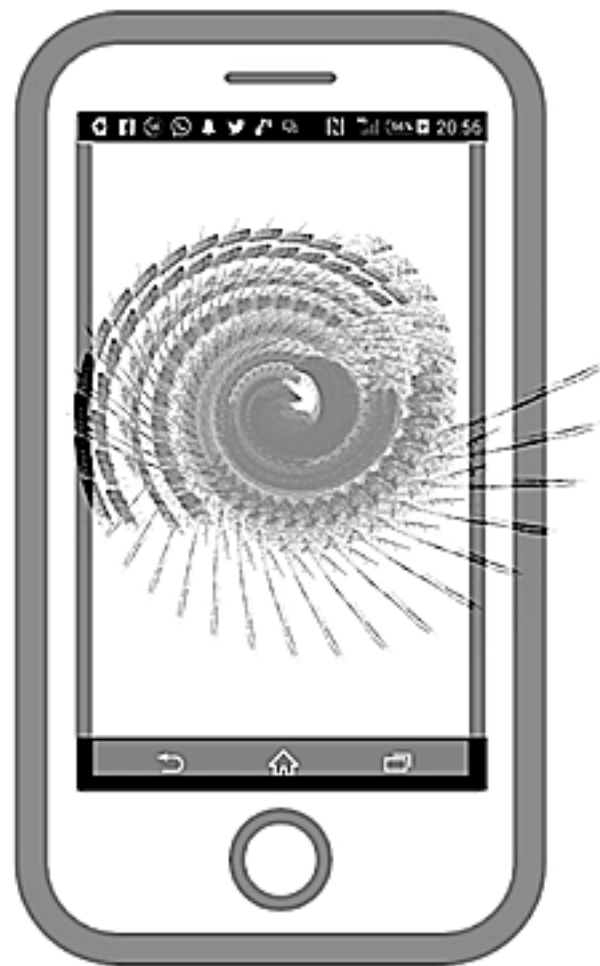
Visual sound blind picture

see more: https://www.eleonorebak.com/design-experience-utilisateur

Human perception of a sound trajectory
study in a smart room

see more https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01451609

Human perception of a sound trajectory
study in a smart room

see more https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01451609

Angle en radians

Temps écoulé en secondes
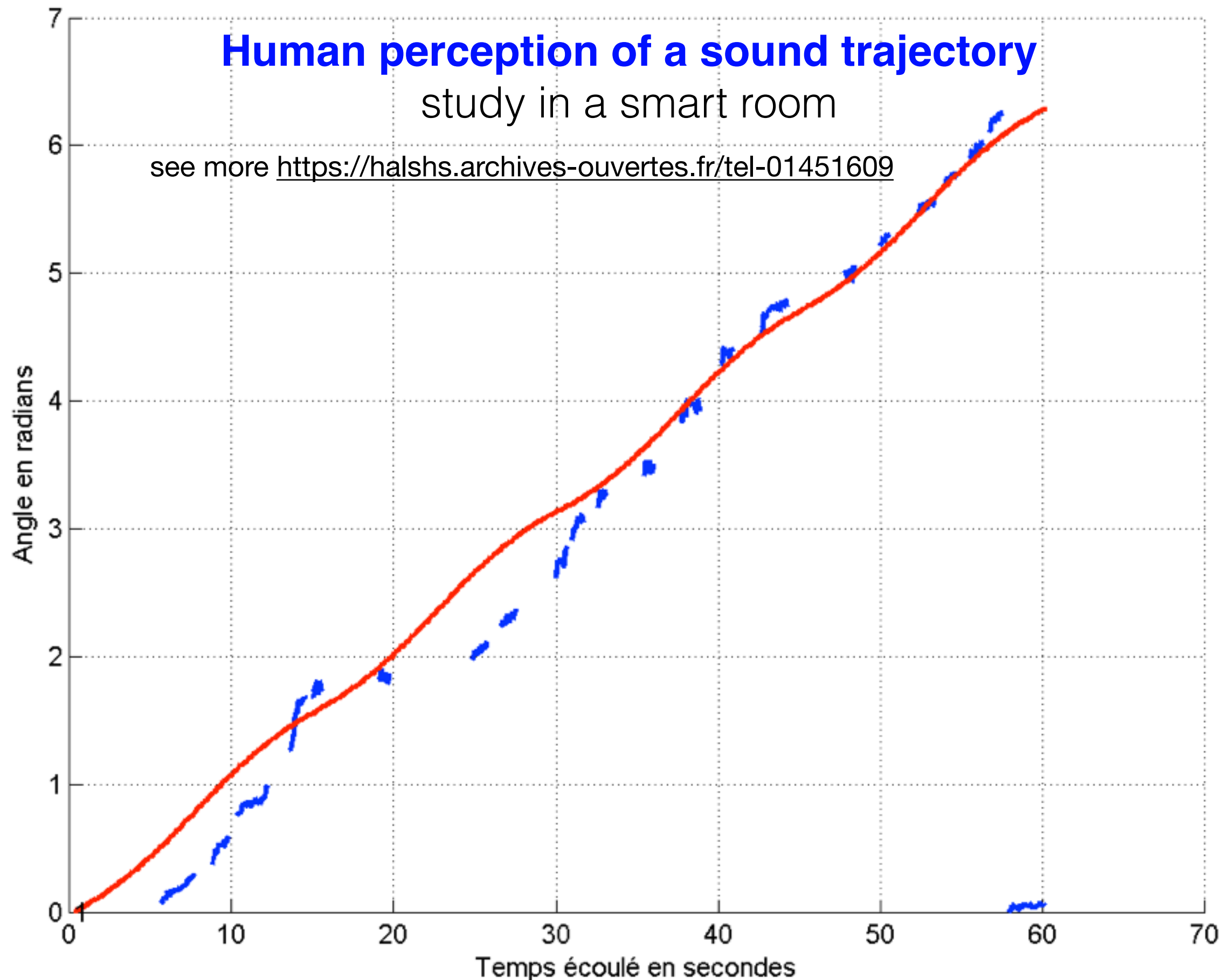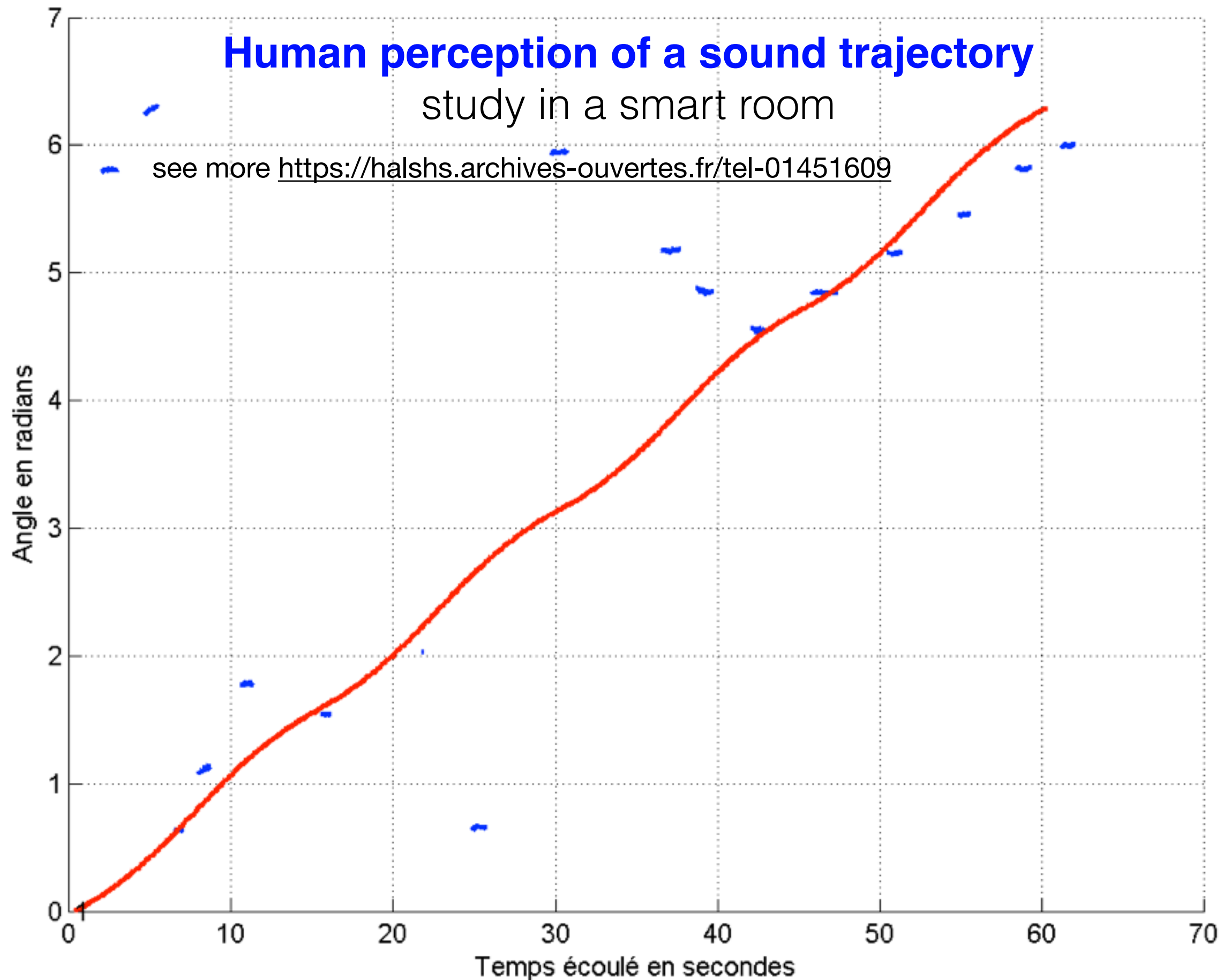
Exhibited VIDEO N° 2 : Soundcloud *St Jean de Luz* an acoustic encoding
© Bak Eléonore 2012 - registration number SACD N°: 274645

Church Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Saint-Jean-de-Luz (F), summer 2012, 12:00 in the morning, outdoor temperature ≈ 25°C, indoor temperature ≈ 18°C, presence of horizontal airstreams, space (50 x 17 x 20 m, culminant 35 m) slightly clammy: *successive continuous formal structures, changing effects under unities passing from one balcony to the other : expansive effects, contremur fade in fade out* (cf qualifications we use in CRESSON for describing acoustic effects)

« As usually, I realized my sound-drawing of the church Saint-Jean-Baptiste in an intuitive way. The listening patterns vary in an astonishing way from the other visualisations (which are generally more organic). Very graphic, they look like the logos of the bull farmers drawen in the arenities before corridas. These logos echos the emblem of Médoc linked to Louis XIV reign. Later I learned that this church has been the celebration space for his marriage with the spanish infante Marie-Thérèse (1660). The entrancy has been sealed after their passing through. This fitting out designed a real acoustic encoding. »

see full animation in https://www.eleonorebak.com/archeologie-sonore

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